



Cattle Call

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Demands for Beef Check-off Reform

Amid a backdrop of feverishly campaigning politicians and the possibility of a change in administration, one federal agency, namely the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB), has come under fire.

The Colorado Independent Cattle-Growers Association issued a letter to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, urging investigation of the CBB's recent activities.

The letter cited the presence of CBB board members at the National Farmers Union (NFU) annual convention March 7, 2012 in Omaha, Neb., using their position and possibly beef check-off funding to sway voters with regard to policy under debate.

"The CBB Chairman, Vice Chair, and Secretary used their executive positions and possibly check-off funds to influence not only NFU members, but also fellow CBB directors, with the intent of eliminating support for the pending resolution," charged CICA President Gerald Schreiber in the association's message to Secretary Vilsack.

The resolutions in question suggested changes in how the Beef Check-off Program does business with the intent to make it a more transparent and independently functioning entity.

CICA's letter to Secretary Vilsack went on to explain the importance of calling the leadership of the CBB to account for their actions.

"This was a very appalling incident associated with discrediting our check-off and industry," President Schreiber said.

CICA and NFU are hardly the only organizations calling for major changes of the Beef Check-off Program. South Dakota Stockgrowers Association also demanded reform of the program in a letter addressed to

Secretary Vilsack.

The South Dakota Stockgrowers Association called for reforms within the program itself including amendment of the Beef Promotion Act to allow the CBB to function as an independent entity. Among the suggested amendments was a limit on how much funding the CBB can contractually award any one organization.

"It is becoming increasingly difficult for our members to justify sending their hard earned dollars to a contracting organization without more substantial assurance that the money is being separated from any lobbying efforts," declared President Shane Kolb of the South Dakota Stockgrowers.

Trouble has been brewing for the CBB and its largest subcontractor, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), since a financial audit revealed that the latter had misappropriated large amounts of money.

Two separate financial audits were conducted, the first by Clifton-Gunderson, and the second by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). Their combined findings resulted in over \$305,000 worth of misappropriated funds by NCBA.

Last summer, the United States Cattlemen's Association (USCA) requested a full investigation of the mismanaged funds and other concerns about the operation of the CBB.

In a missive to membership, USCA President Jon Wooster put it bluntly: "USCA believes that the circumstances are so serious and the magnitude of the problems so great that the Secretary of Agriculture must step in and investigate the issues and outline the remedies." He went on to state, "what USCA policy does not support is the undue influence over the check-off by any contractor".

BULL BY THE HORNS

Labor Department's "Child Labor Law" Abandoned

An unmistakably contentious law prohibiting youth from working on farms and ranches saw an unceremonious death at the hands of the agency responsible for its creation.

The U.S. Department of Labor released a statement April 26, 2012 stating that the proposed rule had caused such a public outcry that it had completely withdrawn the proposition.

"The decision to withdraw this rule—including provisions to define the 'parental exemption'—was made in response to thousands of comments expressing concerns about the effect of the proposed rules on small family-owned farms," the department said in a statement.

The rule had attracted opposition by numerous organizations and individuals, many of whom disseminated information via social media such as Facebook. Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin voiced her opinion with a post titled "If I Want America To Fail, I'd Ban Kids From Farm Work".

The proposed rule was to prohibit youth 15 and under from operating certain types of machinery, application of pesticides, and even from being in the vicinity of sexually mature livestock such as bulls.

Proponents of the rule maintained that it was not an attack on the "family farm" since a parental exemption allowed youth to work on their parents' farms and ranches.

Nevertheless, opponents pointed out that the rule would make it impossible for youth to work with relatives or neighbors on their property.

The Department of Labor stated that in lieu of the rule it would work with organizations such as FFA, 4-H, National Farmers Union, and the American Farm Bureau Federation to develop educational programs on safety.

"The Obama administration is firmly committed to promoting family farmers and respecting the rural way of life," the department said in its statement ending with, "To be clear, this regulation will not be pursued for the duration of the Obama administration."

CICA Works with Policy Makers at Legislative Day

Colorado Independent Cattle-Growers members and directors gathered in Denver for the annual Legislative Day at the Capitol for a chance to visit with policy makers.

Members were in attendance to meet Totsy Rees who acts as lobbyist for CICA. The members also had the opportunity to speak with Rep. Wes McKinley, Rep. Randy Baumgardner, and Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg.

The morning and a portion of the afternoon was devoted to discussion with the representatives.

Following lunch, Chuck and Roni Sylvester gave a presentation about their experience in working with such Federal agencies as the Bureau of Land Management. The Sylvesters have been working for years to maintain their rights to graze cattle on land in Wyoming. The land in question has been infringed upon by a protected wild horse herd.

CICA puts on a Legislative Day every February at the Capitol. The event is an important component in the CICA's commitment to insuring the voice of the association is heard by law makers.

CICA members and directors in attendance at the 2012 Legislative Day at the Colorado State Capitol in Denver on February 14, 2012.



IRONS IN THE FIRE

Quick Updates on State and National Issues

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING (COOL)

The U.S. Trade Representative announced in March that an appeal of the World Trade Organization's ruling deeming COOL a violation of trade agreements is forthcoming. The appeal is expected sometime this summer.

HSUS CREATES ADVISORY COUNCIL IN COLORADO

Pursuing an association with producers that comes as a surprise to many, the Humane Society of the United States has formed The Colorado Agricultural Council of The Humane Society of the United States. The activist group says the council seeks to get "[l]ocal farmers to join with The HSUS to foster better animal welfare and environmental stewardship".

CICA BECOMES NOMINATING ENTITY FOR CBB

Colorado Independent CattleGrowers Association has recently been accepted as a nominating body for the Cattlemen's Beef Board.

U.S. FARM BILL

The U.S. Congress is busy crafting the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012—what will be a new Farm Bill should it make it through all the channel necessary for legislation. The last Farm Bill, containing the GIPSA Rules, made its way to the White House Office of Management and Budget where it lost all vital content and force.

mark your callanders

7th Annual Convention July 13-15, 2012

LaSalle, CO

Hosted by Chuck and Roni Sylvester
Contact Tom Moulden for more details
(970) 858-0980



Note from the Editor

Hello CattleGrowers!

I thought I would take some newsletter space to introduce myself. My name is Sarah Nuss and I'm honored to be working for Colorado Independent CattleGrowers Association as press liaison and newsletter editor.

Some of you may recognize me as the 2009 Intern for CICA. Back then I was Sarah Clark. Three years later, I'm now married and have graduated from CSU with a Bachelors in Agricultural Business. I live in Karval, Colo. where my husband and I work with my family in the seedstock business. It's great to be back on the ranch where every day I'm reminded of how blessed I am to be free, industrious, and with my family.

Reliance on family and community is a facet of rural life that is often taken for granted, but which I feel is so important. CICA is an organization in which we rely on one another, our neighbors, to act as watchdogs for our industry. This association allows for the exchange of ideas and strength in numbers. Our voices alone may not carry, but when we speak in unison, suddenly people listen.

It's no secret that our way of life is relegated to the past by many, and downright attacked by others. The work of CICA is so important in that we can come together with similar concerns and work towards a common goal of preserving our way of life for future generations. I was blessed to have a ranch to which I could return, a legacy my grandfather and father have slaved all their lives to provide. I want other young people to still have that option available to them, because the life of a cattleman is many things (mostly unglamorous) but it is above all a life of freedom.

Thank you CICA Board of Directors for the opportunity to work with you. And to the members, I hope to meet some of you this summer at the 7th Annual Convention!

Sincerely,
Sarah Nuss

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Greetings CICA Members and Friends:

Life here at Last Chance has been busy as we are winding down calving. While we have had a little moisture, the ranch is in need of a good soaking rain to get our grass going for summer pasture. I know a lot of you are in the same predicament.

Your CICA organization continues to work hard to protect and represent your interests as beef producers and independent land owners. While we did not sponsor any specific legislation during this 2012 Colorado legislative session, our CICA legislative committee along with our CICA lobbyist, Totsy Rees, have kept on top of happenings at the Capitol. Work is being done at the national level to develop a 2012 Farm Bill. We have had input through Bill Bullard and R-CALF trying to keep a "Livestock Title" in the new farm bill. There is a big push by the AMI, NCBA, and NPPC to do away with the "Livestock Title". CICA feels that this is an overt attempt by these organizations to strip COOL and any competition protection from the farm bill. Please call your representative and both Senators informing them that producers and consumers need COOL and that competition language/provisions are necessary to protect independent producers from unfair buying practices by meat processors and the integrators.

CICA is concerned with the current management of our beef check-off. I am guilty of not being more educated on how our \$1 check-off works from the State Beef Councils, to the Federation of Beef councils, to the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB). Much thanks to the Lincoln County Stockmen for putting a seminar together this last January to help educate us. The check-off has done a lot of good helping to develop new products, educate the consumers, and helps create demand but also has led to some abuses by the sole contractor, NCBA, crossing over into the policy arena with our beef check-off dollars. NCBA is using the money to influence policy which is in direct conflict to language of the original "Act". The CICA board is actively inputting to the USDA and the Secretary of Agri-

culture with our concerns and documented need for change, and meaningful oversight. On a positive note, thanks to Cody Jolly, John Reid, and Korry Lewis for getting CICA the application to USDA in March for certification by our association as a recognized group that can nominate names for appointment to the Cattleman's Beef Board. We received confirmation in April that we have been approved.

There are so many issues facing us as beef producers and independent business people. We have to be careful to choose our battles. It is important that while all of us are busy producing we have connections through, R-CALF, the Paragon Foundation, American Stewards of Liberty and OCM to help represent us both locally and nationally. Please get involved with a phone call or e-mail to let us know what you think. We need your input as members.

Lastly, please note our summer convention will be Saturday, July 14, at the Chuck and Roni Sylvester farm in LaSalle. The convention committee has worked hard to put a very good program together for Saturday afternoon. The Sylvester's are very excited to be hosting us and we are very fortunate to partake of their hospitality. The fund raiser committee is again working with Kelly's Guns of La Junta and your directors are selling tickets on a Remington rifle. Please help CICA out and buy some raffle tickets.

Hoping for a good rain this weekend!

Gerald Schreiber

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